

PHOTO: LA COSTA RESORT AND SPA



La Costa Resort and Spa

Arrival/Check-in: I arrived at the beautiful seaside area of Carlsbad, Calif., by car and began my search for the resort. I was a little confused by the entrance despite my GPS navigation directions, but did manage to make my way through the maze. The valet staff, very quick and helpful in taking my vehicle and bags, guided me to the front desk. Check-in went smoothly and with a smile, but I still had to get to my room. The resort is spread out, so guests may opt for golf cart transport to their rooms. I found this to be a nice touch, however was a tad put off at the wait after discovering that I could have walked the less than 100 yards. **(28/30)**

Guest Quarters: The lovely one-bedroom suite provided a stunning view of one of the championship golf courses. All appeared to be well appointed with divine amenities from the spa; the flat-panel televisions in each room offered plenty of mindless entertainment. Unfortunately, the desk was less than adequate as a workspace, with the outlet coming loose from the wall. This would have been a minor inconvenience, but the bed was the final straw. Actually, I probably would have had a better night had I been sleeping on straw. For a 5-star spa resort, it was a disappointment to spend the night tossing and turning on a bed with springs pressing into my back. Had I just returned from an expensive spa treatment, I would have been incensed at waking up with a backache. **(19/30)**

Services/Amenities: The resort has two very famous

18-hole PGA championship golf courses, although it doesn't currently host any tournaments. The annual Acura Classic Tennis Tournament takes place on the resort's 21 courts — clay, grass and composite. Although I did not have any time to enjoy the spa, it is world class. It even includes the Chopra Center, founded by Dr. Deepak Chopra as a perfect complement to a full mind- and body-relaxing experience.

The pools are also excellent, but there was a lack of on-site dining choices. Aside from the poolside café, there are only two other options. I found the lack of choice insufficient for a resort with more than 400 guestrooms. Area restaurants aren't too far away, but who wants to get in a car and deal with traffic after a day at the pool and spa? **(37/40)**

The Experience: The location is gorgeous. La Costa, which translates from Spanish to "The Coast," dates to the 1960s and has maintained its draw for the rich and famous in Southern California. Current owner KSL Resorts has continued to enhance the beautiful coastal California Spanish architecture while modernizing the offerings. Having been the very first full-service spa resort in the United States, it has continued to stay ahead of the curve in many areas.

Total Score: 84/100 Morissa Pawl

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